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ABSTRACT

A family of cDNA sequences derived from hepatitis C virus (HCV) are provided. These sequences encode antigens which react immunologically with antibodies present in individuals with non-A non-B hepatitis (NANBH), but which are absent from individuals infected with hepatitis A virus, or hepatitis B virus, and also are absent in control individuals. The HCV cDNA sequences lack substantial homology to the sequences of hepatitis delta virus (HDV) and HBV. A comparison of the sequences of amino acids encoded in the HCV cDNA with the sequences of Flaviviruses indicates that HCV may be related to the Flaviviruses.

The HCV cDNA sequences and the polypeptides encoded therein are useful as reagents for the detection and therapy of HCV. The reagents provided in the invention are also useful for the isolation of NANBH agent(s), for the propagation of these agents in tissue culture, and for the screening of antiviral agents for HCV.

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